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Brandt Alleged Agent for CIA, Possibly KGB

Willy Brandt, former Berlin mayor and West German chancellor, was on the CIA payroll in the 1950s, and may have sold information to the KGB as well, intelligence sources have revealed.

Brandt, whose East-West contacts dated back to his days as a journalist in World War II, provided valuable intelligence information to the CIA in the postwar years. The spy agency also regarded its payments to Brandt as an investment—helping him to further his career in the Social Democratic Party.

But his CIA handlers never fully trusted Brandt, because other agents developed information that he had close ties to the Soviet secret police, and may even have been on their payroll.

Brandt's distinguished political career came to an abrupt halt in May, 1974, when he resigned as chancellor after one of his closest aides was revealed as a longtime East German spy. As chancellor, Brandt had continued to show secret documents to the aide long after being warned that the man might be a spy. It also turned out that Brandt had been compromised many years before by a Kremlin Mata Hari.

The disclosures about Brandt's relations with the CIA come from four U.S. intelligence sources interviewed by my associate Dale Van Atta over several months. The sources all have had long careers in the CIA and other intelligence agencies.

Brandt was born 68 years ago next month in the German port city of Lubeck. While still in his teens, he joined a far-left political group and battled the Nazis during the tumultuous years before Hitler was named chancellor in 1933. Brandt fled to Norway, where he became a journalist and eventually a Norwegian citizen. When the Germans invaded Norway in the spring of 1940, Brandt had to flee once again, this time to Sweden.

It was in Stockholm, according to my sources, that Brandt established ties with both U.S. and Soviet intelligence. American embassy files of that period indicate that he was considered an astute, reliable source.

After the war, Brandt returned to his devastated fatherland as both journalist and political activist. A certified anti-Nazi, he was regarded by the Americans as a politician on the rise. Among those encouraging the CIA's interest in Brandt was Eleanor Dulles, the State Department's German expert and sister of CIA Director Allen Dulles.

According to one former CIA

agent, Brandt provided "sensational information on East Germany and Russia" during the height of the Cold War. At the time, Brandt was in Berlin, a hotbed of East-West espionage. Times were hard in the postwar years, and one route to survival for well-placed Germans was the sale of information to the CIA, British intelligence or the KGB.

But a hitch developed in Brandt's case, according to a former CIA agent. "We learned he was working for them," he said, referring to the KGB.

Despite evidence Brandt was working both sides of the street, the CIA continued payments to him until at least 1956, the year before he became mayor of West Berlin. In 1969, he became West German chancellor. My sources could not say what Brandt's relationship with the CIA was in the years of his political prominence.

Footnote: Through an aide, Klaus-Henning Rosen, Brandt heatedly denied he ever took money from either the CIA or the KGB.

Executive Memo: Labor Secretary Raymond J. Donovan emphatically denies it, but sources at both the White House and the Labor Department say he'll be out shortly after the first of the year. They've even come up with a likely successor: Undersecretary Malcolm Lovell, former head of the Rubber Manufacturers Association.